



## **EFF MOURNS THE PASSING OF FOOTBALL LEGEND EDSON “PELÉ” ARANTES do NASCIMENTO**

Friday, 30 December 2022

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) mourns the passing of Brazilian football icon Edson Arantes do Nascimento, who died at the age of 82 on the 29th of December 2022. Affectionately known as Pelé, he was a trailblazer of the football world and led Brazil to three World Cup victories, establishing them as a dominant force in global football.

Born in the poverty stricken streets of Três Corações, Pelé emerged as a footballing sensation at the tender age of 16 at the Brazilian super club Santos. He went on to make his World Cup debut for the Brazilian national team in 1958 when he was only 17 years old, and set the international stage alight with dazzling skill and goals that led Brazil to World Cup triumph. Pelé would proceed to win two World Cups in 1962 and 1970 cementing his place as the most successful player in the competition to date.

Having been declared a National Treasure by Brazil, Pelé played for Brazilian club Santos for a large part of his career, leading them to great success such as winning six Campeonato Brasileiro Série A titles, two Copa Libertadores crowns, two Intercontinental Cups and one Intercontinental Supercup.

Pelé’s influence on football marked the sports place as that of the poor and working class, as his football origins stemmed from an impoverished background which shaped his world outlook. In Brazil today, just as in South Africa young children play football on dusty streets with makeshift material and without professional gear simply out of the love for the game. Pelé became not only an ambassador of football, but of peace, equality and humanity.

His thrilling football skills were felt far and wide, and included an inspiring influence on footballers of our own country. The likes of Dr. Kaizer Motaung, Ace Ntsoelengo and Jomo Sono competed with Pelé during their respective stints in the North American Soccer League (NASL), which are fond memories they have.

The late legend was part of the international solidarity fight against Apartheid, notably in 1960 when he vowed that he would never visit South Africa again until Nelson Mandela was released from prison, after being refused to leave OR Tambo International airport by the nationalist party apparatchiks.

We call upon the youth of the world and those of South Africa in particular to emulate Pelé as a symbol of black excellence, and be inspired by the legacy of the revered icon of world football who aged with grace and pride.

Adiós Rey Pelé, farewell King Pelé!

**ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS**

**Sinawo Thambo** (National Spokesperson) 072 629 7422

**Leigh-Ann Mathys** (National Spokesperson) 082 304 7572

✉ [communications@effonline.org](mailto:communications@effonline.org)

🌐 <http://www.effonline.org>

🐦 @EFFSouthAfrica

📷 @EFFSouthAfrica

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1million members by December 2022